

and his subjects of the Netherlands. On the one hand we see the determination, lacerated into a passion, to enforce obedience to the royal will and the traditional Church, cost what it might. On the other, an equal determination on the part of a large section of the people to resist the coercion of conscience, and even to challenge the supremacy of the traditional creed, in spite of the defection or vacillations of a large number of those who had swelled the ranks of the aristocratic opposition. To this pass various factors had been steadily and surely operating. The Dutch revolution, of which this popular outburst was the prelude, was in its origin inspired by the determination of the Protestants to obtain liberty of conscience, and by the fierce reaction against a persecuting Church and Government. The religious motive was seconded by the aristocratic opposition to the autocratic *regime* of the hated minister of an alien king, and by the antipathy of Spaniard and Netherlander. It was intensified by the spirit of liberty which had survived the centralising policy of Charles the Bold and his imperial and royal successors, and had been nurtured by a long tradition of self-government. Philip's own lack of sympathy and insight, the vacillation and indecision, due partly to the difficulties of the situation, partly to the lack of the genius to rule, aggravated the friction between these restive Flemings and Dutchmen and the monarch whom they suspected as a despot and disliked as a foreigner. Moreover, to play successfully the *rdle* of autocrat over such a people, Philip should have lived at Brussels instead of Madrid, and should have been born with talents far above mediocrity. Mediocrity might lord it over priest-ridden Spain; it could not master these free-spirited men of the north, even with all the tenacity of religious fanaticism to second it.

SOURCES.—For the origins of the Reformation in the Netherlands—Ullmann, *Reformatoren vor der Reformation in Deutschland und den Niederlanden* (1841), translated by Menzies (1855); Froucle, *Life and Letters of Erasmus* (1894); Seebohm, *The Oxford Reformers* (for Erasmus); Altmeyer, *Les Precurseurs de la Reforme aux Pays-Bas* (1886); Barry, *Catholic Europe* (from the Catholic point of view), in vol. i. of *The Cambridge Modern History* (1902). For the opposition